

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4309

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 5180

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR CASC ET US (HANNA, RICHARD)

SUBJECT: THE RICHARD HANNA CASE: NEXT STEPS

REF: ADDIS 4915 AND PREVIOUS

1. IT HAS NOW BEEN A WEEK SINCE I "STRONGLY PROTESTED" BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO THE ACTING FONMIN THE CONTINUING IMPRISONMENT WITHOUT CHARGE OF AMCIT RICHARD HANNA AND REQUESTED THE PROMPT DISPOSITION OF HIS CASE (REFTEL).

2. AN EMBASSY INQUIRY OF THE ACTING FONMIN TODAY (APRIL 30) ELICITED THE RESPONSE THAT OUR NOTE HAD BEEN TRANSMITED TO HIGHER AUTHORITY ON APRIL 25 AND THE ADMISSION THAT THE ACTING FONMIN WAS UNABLE TO TELL US WHEN AN ANSWER MIGHT BE EXPECTED. THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE AWARE FROM OUR REPORTING THAT DIRG DECISION-MAKING IS PARTICULARLY UNSATISFACTORY AT PRESENT BECAUSE THE PMAC SEEMS TO BE GOING THROUGH A PERIOD OF PARTICULARLY ACUTE INTERNAL CONFLICT. THIS, IN TURN, SUGGESTS THAT AN ANSWER MAY NOT BE FORTHCOMING FOR SOME TIME.

3. OUR CONSUL MET WITH HANNA TODAY WHILE THE LATTER WAS AT HIS HOUSE, UNDER GUARD. SHE REPORTS THAT HE LOOKS PHYSICALLY RUN DOWN - - TREMBLING AND NERVOUS - - AND IS PSYCHOLOGICALLY IN A DEPLORABLE STATE. HANNA UNDERSTANDABLY FEELS (IN THE 112TH DAY OF HIS INCARCERATION) THAT THE EMBASSY'S REPRESENTATIONS HAVE HAD NO EFFECT THUS FAR AND THAT HE MAY REMAIN IN DETENTION FOR THE INDETERMINATE FUTURE. HANNA SAYS, "YOU MIGHT AS WELL TELL
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ME IF I AM IN THIS ALONE BECAUSE THEN I WILL TAKE WHAT STEPS

ARE OPEN TO ME TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM. I CANNOT CONTINUE THIS WAY." HANNA INDICATED THAT IF EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE IS NOT FORTHCOMING IN THE NEAR FUTURE, HE WILL CONSIDER GETTING A MESSAGE TO CONGRESS OR MAKING A BREAK FOR IT. (CONSOFF STRONGLY RECOMMENDED AGAINST ANY RASH ACTION).

4. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I RECOMMEND THAT I BE INSTRUCTED EITHER TO MAKE STRONG ORAL REPRESENTATIONS TO PMAC CHAIRMAN BG TEFERI BANTI OR LEAVE A VERY STIFF NOTE WITH THE FONMIN. MY INCLINATION IS TO DO THE LATTER UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT HAS OTHER VIEWS, PARTICULARLY SINCE SOME TIME MAY ELAPSE BEFORE I CAN SECURE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE CHAIRMAN.

5. ON SUBSTANCE, I WOULD "ON INSTRUCTIONS" REVIEW THE CASE BRIEFLY, HIGHLIGHTING THE STATEMENTS MADE TO US BY THE EPMG ON ITS INTENTIONS EXPEDITIOUSLY TO RESOLVE IT IN A MANNER COMMENSURATE WITH THE MUTUAL INTEREST; NOTE THAT THESE STATEMENTS HAVE REMAINED WITHOUT EFFECT; POINT OUT THAT THE EPMG IS IN VIOLATION OF THE TREATY OF AMITY; SAY THAT THE US TAKES A SERIOUS VIEW OF THE SITUATION THAT HAS THUS BEEN CREATED, THE CONTINUATION OF WHICH WOULD COMPEL IT TO CONSIDER WHAT FURTHER STEPS MAY BE OPEN TO IT TO PROTECT ITS NATIONALS; AND END VERY STIFFLY WITH LANGUAGE TO THE EFFECT THAT THE USG FINDS IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE THE PROFESSED DESIRE OF ETHIOPIA'S LEADERS FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE US WITH THEIR HANDLING OF HANNA.

6. THE DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL OF THIS COURSE OF ACTION IS REQUESTED. IF THE DEPARTMENT WISHES TO PROVIDE ME WITH SUITABLE LANGUAGE, THAT WOULD ALSO BE WELCOME. I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE THESE REPRESENTATIONS ASAP FOLLOWING THE FOUR-DAY ETHIOPIAN HOLIDAY WEEKEND WHICH BEGINS HERE TOMORROW.
HUMMEL

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